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tures, and other apparatus of a water or sewage system in a building. **2.** The work or trade of a plumber.

**plumb line** ► *n.* A line from which a weight is suspended to determine verticality or depth.

**plume** (plūm) ► *n.* **1.** A feather, esp. a large and showy one. **2.** Something that resembles a long feather: *a plume of smoke*. ► *v.* **plumed, plum-ing** **1.** To decorate with or as if with plumes. **2.** To pride (oneself) in a self-satisfied way. [*< Lat. plūma.*]

**plum-met** (plūm'it) ► *v.* To fall or drop straight down. [*< Lat. plumbum, lead.*]

**plump**<sup>1</sup> (plūmp) ► *adj.* **-er, -est.** Well-rounded and full in form; chubby. ► *v.* To make or become plump. [*Prob. < MLGer. plomp, thick.*] —**plump-ness** *n.*

**plump**<sup>2</sup> (plūmp) ► *v.* **1.** To drop abruptly or heavily. **2.** To give full support or praise. ► *n.* **1.** A heavy or abrupt fall. **2.** The sound of such a fall. ► *adv.* **1.** With a heavy or abrupt drop. **2.** Straight down. [*< MLGer. plumpen.*]

**plun-der** (plūn'dər) ► *v.* To rob of goods by force, esp. in time of war; pillage. ► *n.* Property stolen by fraud or force. [*< MLGer., household goods.*] —**plun-der-er** *n.*

**plunge** (plūnj) ► *v.* **plunged, plung-ing** **1.** To thrust or throw forcefully into a substance or place. **2.** To enter or cast suddenly into a given state, situation, or activity. **3.** To descend steeply or suddenly. **4.** To speculate or gamble extravagantly. [*< VLat. \*plumbicare, heave a sounding lead.*] —**plunge** *n.*

**plung-er** (plūn'jər) ► *n.* **1.** A device consisting of a rubber suction cup attached to the end of a stick, used to unclog drains and pipes. **2.** A machine part that operates with a thrusting or plunging movement.

**plunk** (plūngk) ► *v.* **1.** To throw, place, or drop heavily or abruptly. **2.** To strum or pluck (a stringed instrument). **3.** To emit a hollow, twanging sound. [*Imit.*] —**plunk** *n.*

**plu-per-fect** (plū-pūr'fikt) ► *adj.* Of or relating to a verb tense used to express action completed before a specified or implied past time. ► *n.* **1.** The pluperfect tense. **2.** A verb or form in this tense. [*< Lat. plūs quam perfectum, more than perfect.*]

**plu-ral** (plū'rəl) ► *adj.* Of or being a grammatical form that designates more than one of the things specified. ► *n.* **1.** The plural number or form. **2.** A word or term in the plural form. [*ME plurel < OFr. < Lat. plūralis < plūs, plūr-, more.*] —**plu'ral-ize** *v.* —**plu'ral-i-za'tion** *n.*

**plu-ral-ism** (plū'rəl'iz'əm) ► *n.* A condition of society in which numerous distinct ethnic, religious, or cultural groups coexist within one nation. —**plu'ral-ist** *n.* —**plu'ral-is'tic** *adj.*

**plu-ral-i-ty** (plū-rāl'i-tē) ► *n., pl. -ties* **1a.** In a contest of more than two choices, the number of votes cast for the winner if this number is not more than one half of the total votes cast. **b.** The number by which the vote of a winning choice in such a contest exceeds that of the closest opponent. **2.** The larger or greater part.

**plus** (plūs) ► *conj.* **1. Math.** Increased by: *Two plus two is four*. **2.** Added to; along with. ► *adj.* **1.** Positive or on the positive part of a scale. **2.** Added or extra: *a plus value*. ► *n., pl. plus-es* or **plus-es** **1. Math.** A symbol (+) used to indicate addition or a positive quantity. **2.** A fa-

vorable condition or factor. [*Lat. plūs, more.*]

**Usage:** When mathematical equations are pronounced as English sentences, the verb is usually in the singular: *Two plus two is (or equals) four*. • The use of *plus* introducing an independent clause, as in *She has a lot of talent, plus she is willing to work hard*, is limited chiefly to informal contexts.

**plush** (plūsh) ► *n.* A fabric having a thick, deep pile. ► *adj.* **-er, -est.** Luxurious. [*< OFr. peluchier, pluck.*] —**plush'i-ly, plush'ly** *adv.* —**plush'i-ness, plush'ness** *n.* —**plush'y** *adj.*

**Plu-tarch** (plūō'tārk'). A.D. 46?–120? Greek biographer and philosopher.

**Plu-to** (plūō'tō) ► *n.* **1. Gk. Myth.** The god of the dead and the ruler of the underworld. **2.** The 9th and usu. farthest planet from the sun, 4.5 billion km (2.8 billion mi) distant at perihelion and 7.4 billion km (4.6 billion mi) at aphelion, with a diameter less than half that of Earth. [*< Gk. ploutos, wealth.*]

**plu-toc-ra-cy** (plūō-tōk'rā-sē) ► *n., pl. -cies* **1.** Government by the wealthy. **2.** A wealthy class that controls a government. [*Gk. ploutos, wealth + -cracy.*] —**plu'to-crat'** (plūō'tā-krāt') *n.* —**plu'to-crat'ic, plu'to-crat'i-cal** *adj.*

**plu-ton-ic** (plūō-tōn'ik) ► *adj.* Of deep igneous or magmatic origin: *plutonic rocks*.

**plu-to-ni-um** (plūō-tō'nē-əm) ► *n.* Symbol **Pu** A naturally radioactive, silvery metallic element used as a reactor fuel and in nuclear weapons. At. no. 94. See table at **element**.

**plu-vi-al** (plūō'vē-əl) ► *adj.* Of or caused by rain. [*< Lat. pluvia, rain < pluere, to rain.*]

**ply**<sup>1</sup> (plī) ► *v.* **plied** (plīd), **ply-ing** **1.** To join together, as by molding or twisting. **2.** To double over (e.g., cloth). ► *n., pl. plies* **1.** A layer, as of cloth or wood. **2.** One of the strands twisted together to make yarn, rope, or thread. [*< Lat. plicāre, fold.*]

**ply**<sup>2</sup> (plī) ► *v.* **plied** (plīd), **ply-ing** **1.** To use diligently; wield. **2.** To engage in (e.g., a trade); practice. **3.** To traverse or sail over regularly. **4.** To continue supplying: *plied their guests with food*. [*< APPLY.*]

**Plym-outh** (plīm'əth) **1.** A borough of SW England on **Plymouth Sound**, an inlet of the English Channel. Pop. 259,040. **2.** A town of SE MA on **Plymouth Bay**, an inlet of the Atlantic SE of Boston; founded (1620) by Pilgrims from the *Mayflower*. Pop. 45,608

**ply-wood** (plī'wōd') ► *n.* A structural material made of layers of wood glued together.

**Pm** ► The symbol for the element **promethium**.

**P.M.** also **p.m.** or **P.M.** ► *abbr.* post meridiem See Usage Note at **ante meridiem**.

**PMS** ► *abbr.* premenstrual syndrome

**p.n.** or **P/N** ► *abbr.* promissory note

**pneu-mat-ic** (nūō-māt'ik, nyūō-) also **pneu-mat-i-cal** (-i-kəl) ► *adj.* **1.** Of or relating to air or other gases. **2.** Filled with or operated by compressed air. [*< Gk. pneuma, wind.*]

**pneu-mo-coc-cus** (nūō-mō-kōk'əs, nyūō-) ► *n., pl. -coc-ci* (-kōk'sī, -kōk'ī). A bacterium that causes pneumonia. [*Gk. pneuma, breath + -coccus.*] —**pneu-mo-coc'cal** *adj.*

**pneu-mo-nia** (nūō-mōn'ya, nyūō-) ► *n.* An acute or chronic disease marked by inflammation of the lungs and caused by viruses, bacte-